

Lifesaving Award, a Certificate of Valor, or a Gold, Silver, or Bronze Medal of Valor. This year, it is expected that 37 agency personnel will be honored for acts of bravery that demonstrated extraordinary ingenuity, judgement or zeal.

Mr. Speaker, I would be honored today to read the names of the 3 officers of the Fairfax County Sheriff's Department who will receive the 1999 Valor Awards. Receiving the Lifesaving Award: Private First Class David L. Ross and Deputy Sheriff Charles E. Michael, Jr.; Bronze Medal of Valor: Deputy Sheriff Erin L. Cox.

In 1989, the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce established a special fund to award scholarships to the children of Valor Award medal winners who wish to pursue post-secondary education. Support of the Scholarship Fund demonstrates the sincere appreciation of our County's public safety officers. Over the past ten years, more than one hundred generous businesses and individuals have contributed to this worthy fund, and numerous scholarships have been awarded.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I wish to thank all those who serve the Fairfax County Sheriff's Department. Since 1979, more than 250 members of the Fairfax County Police Department, Fire and Rescue Department, and the Office of the Sheriff have received Gold, Silver or Bronze Medals of Valor. I recognize the professionalism of the men and women who are honored here today. I applaud the heroic efforts the members of the Fairfax Sheriff's Department make on our behalf as we extend our appreciation to these exceptional individuals today. I commend these individuals and their colleagues for their undaunted commitment to the citizenry.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE
CHARLTON COUNTY HIGH
SCHOOL INDIANS, 1999 CLASS A
STATE FOOTBALL CHAMPIONS

HON. SAXBY CHAMBLISS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 10, 2000

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Charlton County High School football team in Folkston, Georgia, for recently capturing the Class A State Championship title. This fine group of young men and their coaches from Georgia's 8th Congressional District deserve great recognition for their hard work, dedication, and success.

This is not only a victory for these fine young men, but for their school, parents, and community as well, particularly all who played a role in supporting the team throughout a hard year of practices and games.

I want to congratulate CCHS head football coach Rich McWhorter and assistant coaches Bill Pitt, Mike Baxter, Mike McNeil, Russ Murray, Josh Howard, Dee Barronton, and Tim Cochran for their leadership and dedication to the team. Coaches spend every day of their lives building character, integrity, and determination in our young athletes, and I want to commend them for their commitment and service.

I also want to take this time to recognize the Charlton County Indians individually. The 1999 players are Steve Smiley, Kevin Davis,

Marcus Cobb, Snapper Hobbs, Cortez Reed, Cecil Reed, Matt Albertie, Fielding Dean, Antwan Harvey, Bama Adams, Mark Smith, Walter Williams, Jamie Jackson, Muhammad Abdullah, Jerome Pollock, Frank Dasher, Anthony Haston, Antonio Harvey, Lamar Williams, Harold Hannans, Lanier Milton, Alex Zow, Dantonio Davis, Chip Jackson, Tim Todd, Pierre Sims, Nathaniel Davis, Jason Bridges, Vincent Green, Nahshon Nicks, Chris Davis, Brian Drury, Demario Austin, Ivory Smiley, Marquis Elmore, Brett Mitchell, Gene Wilson, Norris Woods, Cedric Mildton, Brian Lloyd, Justin Crumbley, J.D. Carter, Jason Wainwright, Spencer Crews, Tony Geoghagan, Ben Huling, Michael Spurlock, Brandon Drury, Dusty Phillips, Luke Gowen, Scott Woolard, Ben Brantley, Marcus Jackson, Kyle Cook, Sam Melton, Scott Davis, Dusty Thomas, Jarvis Blackshear, Justin Pollock, Jimmy Scipp, Matt Drury, and Michael Reed.

Mr. Speaker, victory cannot be achieved without the hard work, talent, and perseverance of every single athlete, the strong leadership and direction of the coaches, in addition to the strong support of parents, teachers, students, and the community. We from South Georgia know how important community support is. The Indians are truly a team to be proud of, and it is an honor for me to represent Charlton County, Georgia, in the U.S. House of Representatives. I look forward to many more victories from this outstanding team in the years to come.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT OF
1996

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 10, 2000

Ms. DeGETTE. Mr. Speaker, four years ago this week, the Congress approved the Telecommunications Act of 1996. While I was not a Member of Congress at that time, I was working on these issues while I was in the Colorado state legislature. On the anniversary of the Act, I would like to both herald the progress that has been made and comment on what challenges remain.

One of the main goals of the 1996 Act was to allow more competitors into local phone markets in order to spur competition and provide better opportunities for consumers. The introduction of competition into the local markets has been much slower than anticipated and, at this time, over 90% of Americans have very little choice of local telephone providers.

The ultimate goal of course is greater competition in all markets, which will result in more choices and better prices for consumers. Many new companies, many of which are located in my home state of Colorado, have sprung up in the past few years and have gained a significant foothold in the exploding business of e-commerce. Nearly a billion dollars are being invested by new entrant telecommunications companies in facilities and services every month.

Today, more than ninety-nine percent of Americans can reach an Internet Service Provider (ISP) with a local phone call. Forty-six states have 100 or more ISPs and more than half of the states have over 200 ISPs to choose from. These ISPs connect into back-

bone providers which have also grown from fourteen at that time the Act was passed, to forty-three today.

This growth has been remarkable and has benefited consumers enormously. It is important that the pro-competitive provisions of the 1996 Act are kept in place so that we can keep moving towards a fully integrated and competitive market.

I am strongly in favor of increased competition in all areas of telecommunications, which will mean better service and lower prices for customers. The sooner there is more competition in both local and long-distance telephone markets and the Internet industry, the better it will be for all consumers. I look forward to the day when my constituents have a multitude of choices in all areas of telecommunications, whether it be voice or high-speed data services.

PHARMACEUTICAL ACT OF 2000

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 10, 2000

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Pharmaceutical Freedom Act of 2000. This legislation ensures that millions of Americans, including seniors, have access to affordable pharmaceutical products. My bill makes pharmaceuticals more affordable to seniors by reducing their taxes. It also removes needless government barriers to importing pharmaceuticals and it protects Internet pharmacies, which are making affordable prescription drugs available to millions of Americans, from being strangled by federal regulation.

The first provision of my legislation provides seniors a tax credit equal to 80 percent of their prescription drug costs. As many of my colleagues have pointed out, our nation's seniors are struggling to afford the prescription drugs they need in order to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle. Yet, the Federal Government continues to impose taxes on Social Security benefits and limits senior citizens' ability to earn additional income by reducing Social Security benefits if a senior exceeds the "earnings limitation." Meanwhile, Congress continually raids the Social Security trust fund to finance unconstitutional programs! It is long past time for Congress to choose between helping seniors afford medicine or using the Social Security trust fund as a slush fund for big government and pork-barrel spending.

Mr. Speaker, I do wish to clarify that this tax credit is intended to supplement the efforts to reform and strengthen the Medicare system to ensure seniors have the ability to use Medicare funds to purchase prescription drugs. I am a strong supporter of strengthening the Medicare system to allow for more choice and consumer control, including structural reforms that will allow seniors to use Medicare funds to cover the costs of prescription drugs.

In addition to making prescription medications more affordable for seniors, my bill lowers the price for prescription medicines by reducing barriers to the importation of FDA-approved pharmaceuticals. Under my bill, anyone wishing to import a drug simply submits an application to the FDA, which then must approve the drug unless the FDA finds the drug is either not approved for use in the U.S.